

Resource Roundtables Held at Hopewell Furnace

Since June 2003, two resource roundtables have been held as the first steps in the General Management Plan. These sessions reviewed the most recent scholarship relating to the park, defined what is important at Hopewell Furnace, and why this site was set aside as a national park. This information played a critical role in developing the draft statements of purpose and significance and identifying draft interpretive themes, prospective audiences and desired visitor experiences at the park.

On June 17th, a panel of history scholars and historic site managers was convened to gain insight into the people, places and events associated with the park, and to analyze the significance of Hopewell Furnace in American history. Almost 40 local historians, friends of the park, and staff from local and county agencies and the National Park Service joined in these discussions.

The objectives of this roundtable were threefold:

- to summarize the national significance and diverse stories associated with Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site and understand its importance in the context of American history;
- to define the major historic issues and perspectives at Hopewell Furnace that illustrate conditions in early industrial America; and,
- to identify other stories, events and nearby sites which are associated with the Hopewell Furnace story but are not currently being protected or interpreted.

On August 20th, a panel of natural resource scholars, site managers, conservationists and friends of the park was convened to gain insight into the location, condition, relation to larger systems and significance of important natural resources within the park. Almost 50 local historians, friends of the park, natural resource site managers and staff from local and county agencies, French Creek State Park and the National Park Service joined in these discussions.

The objectives of this roundtable were also threefold:

- to summarize the evolution of the state and national parks;
- to understand the tangible resources (water, vegetation and animal) and intangible resources (light, air and sound) in the park and their susceptibility to change in the future; and,
- to identify common interests among individuals, organizations and public agencies concerned with the natural resources of the area.

Both roundtables were convened as part of the general management planning process. They were generously supported by Eastern National and hosted by French Creek State Park. The presentations and discussions that were generated will help the National Park Service to better understand the resources in the park and to identify critical issues that need to be addressed during the development of the General Management Plan.